

*Simply
Better!*

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Self-Assessment System

Overview

Exploring Your
Organization for
Opportunities to
Improve

Overview to the Self-Assessment System

Dimension Workbooks

- Customer Focus and Satisfaction
- Leadership
- Information and Analysis
- Strategic Planning
- Human Resource Development
- Management of Process Quality
- Quality and Results

Guidebook for Conducting the Self-Assessment

These icons will help you to find your way through all Simply Better! products:



Resources



Answer-Score-
Brainstorm



Group
Exercise



Case Study



Helpful
Hints



Key Terms
and Concepts



Useful Notes



World Class



Opportunities for
Improvement

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Second printing, June 1996

Doing what you do **Better and Better!**

- This is what continuous improvement is all about.
Doing what you do better and better.
- Understanding and meeting customer requirements.
Always.
- Understanding your services and processes.
At every level.
- Understanding how your organization works.
As a complex system.

This means taking Action.

Continuous improvement is a never-ending, challenging, and invigorating process. It can also be a daunting one. Simply Better! will help you meet this challenge!

The Self-Assessment System

Overview

Simply Better! is a movement of employment and training professionals and organizations committed to continuously improving their services and outcomes by reflecting and acting on what truly satisfies their customers.

Continuous improvement will help your organization meet the needs of your customers. The ability to do this depends on continuously improving all of the processes that contribute to providing services and producing the results which satisfy your customers - program participants and employers.

The essential quality of the organization - providing something of value to the customer - depends on the successful functioning of each of its key parts in interaction with all the other parts. Systemic change takes self-understanding, planning, and commitment to pursuing new ways of doing business.

Simply Better's products will help you to learn, grow, and act to improve.

The Self-Assessment System will help your organization to understand how it functions at a deeper level than you thought possible.

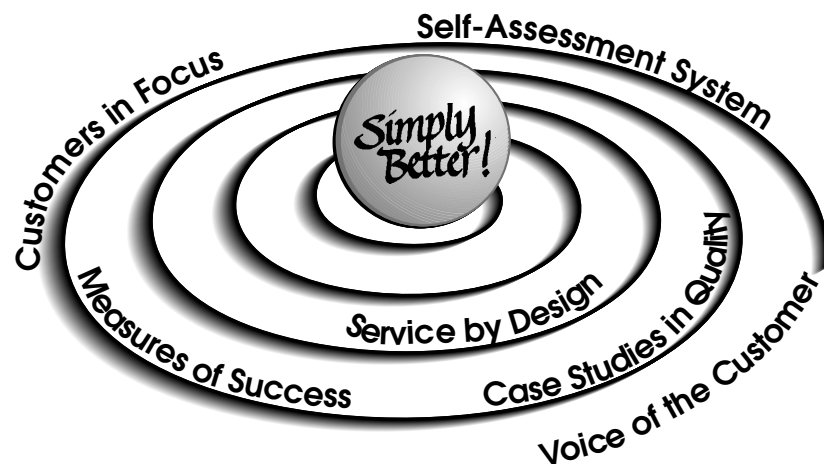
The Voice of the Customer will teach you how to use customer input and feedback tools to make real change.

Service by Design will give you a seven-step process for solving problems starting with the customers' needs.

Measures of Success will help you create meaningful measures of your performance.

Customers in Focus will guide you through running and using the results of focus groups.

Case Studies in Quality will provide you with examples of continuous improvement in organizations like yours.



The Self-Assessment System

Overview

The Self-Assessment System is made up of nine booklets. As with any complex system, these booklets will accomplish little if used individually, but taken together they are much greater than the sum of their parts.

Overview to the Self-Assessment System

This booklet explains the basic concept of continuous improvement, how self-assessment fits into a continuous improvement framework, and how the Simply Better! Self-Assessment System is structured. It also contains the Preview, a fifteen-minute mini-assessment which will help you understand the subjects covered under continuous improvement. A glossary of continuous improvement terms will make the system easier to use, and a brief, annotated bibliography lists the books we have found to be exceptionally useful or enlightening.

The Seven Dimension Workbooks

These seven workbooks, one for each of the seven dimensions, include a description of the subjects covered in the dimension, what a world-class organization might look like, important terms and concepts, and all of the questions, exercises and scoring tables a team will need to complete the assessment. The seven dimension workbooks are:

- Customer Focus and Satisfaction
- Information and Analysis
- Human Resource Development
- Quality and Results
- Leadership
- Strategic Planning
- Management of Process Quality

Guidebook for Conducting the Self-Assessment

This booklet contains complete instructions for conducting the self-assessment. It includes tools and exercises for choosing a coordinator, facilitator(s), and observer; planning the self-assessment from beginning to end; and running the self-assessment. It also has useful hints and examples, drawn from the experiences of our field test sites, and a resource guide.

Simply Better's Self-Assessment System will help your organization understand the model for continuous improvement, conduct a self-assessment, identify key areas for quality improvement, and begin taking action for change.

Who Can Use The Self-Assessment?

Every employment and training organization, regardless of size, can implement quality. Every employment and training organization can benefit from using this system. These concepts are used world-wide by some of the world's largest corporations, as well as by some of your community's smallest manufacturers, service providers, schools, and government agencies. The terms used in the system have been tailored for employment and training providers, but the concepts and the benefits of continuous improvement are universal.

Are you . . .

Large

Small

Urban

RURAL

A service delivery area

A one-stop center

An employment service office

a Community College

A community-based organization

A local workforce development organization

a Nationwide Training Contractor

an enterprise Member

A Pioneer

A novice at Quality and continuous improvement

a struggling performer

an award winner

The Simply Better! Self-Assessment System (S-A-S) has the flexibility to be used by any size or type of employment and training organization. Continuous improvement systems can function at any level of sophistication. This means that organizations at the cutting edge and organizations just starting out have just as much to learn.

The S-A-S is based on the model of continuous improvement used by the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, the President's Quality Award, and numerous prestigious state quality awards. The key concepts that underlie the success of world-class business organizations apply equally to the deliverers of public services, including those of us in the employment and training field.

Continuous Improvement

Everyone wants to satisfy their customers. Everyone wants to achieve exceptional results. Achieving both requires an organization which can perform consistently, which can innovate, and which can react quickly to a changing environment. It also requires a motivated, committed, and passionate workforce. Continuous improvement is a way of life in such organizations.

Part of continuous improvement is the breakthrough: the improvement which dramatically improves quality, saves money, or reduces cycle time. The major redesign of a service, a new computer system, simplified paperwork: all are major changes which can have dramatic effects. This is the **improvement** side of continuous improvement.

The **continuous** side is far more important to long-term success. It is the little things, the everyday changes and improvements which, over time, make the biggest difference. Every member of the organization should be looking continuously for opportunities for improvement, and should be working to make them happen. The Japanese call this *Kaizen* - reaching the target not by waiting for innovative leaps, but by starting immediately to improve what can be improved, and doing it forever.

Fundamental cultural change is a slow, often exasperating process. Continuous improvement cannot become a part of the organizational culture overnight. Given time, however, making improvement part of daily work life, eliminating problems at their source, and working with passion and commitment can become the standard in your organization.

***Kaizen* • reaching the target not by waiting for innovative leaps, but by starting immediately to improve what can be improved, and doing it forever.**

A continuously improving organization exhibits its commitment through its strength in seven important dimensions:

Customers are highly valued and respected; and quality is defined and judged by the customer.

Leadership sets direction and creates a customer orientation with clear and visible values and high expectations.

The organization maintains a strong future orientation with **planning** occurring for both short- and long-term changes.

Employees are valued, empowered, supported, and recognized for their involvement and accomplishments.

All decisions are made based on reliable **information**, data, and analysis.

Quality is designed into processes and services, based on the needs and expectations of customers.

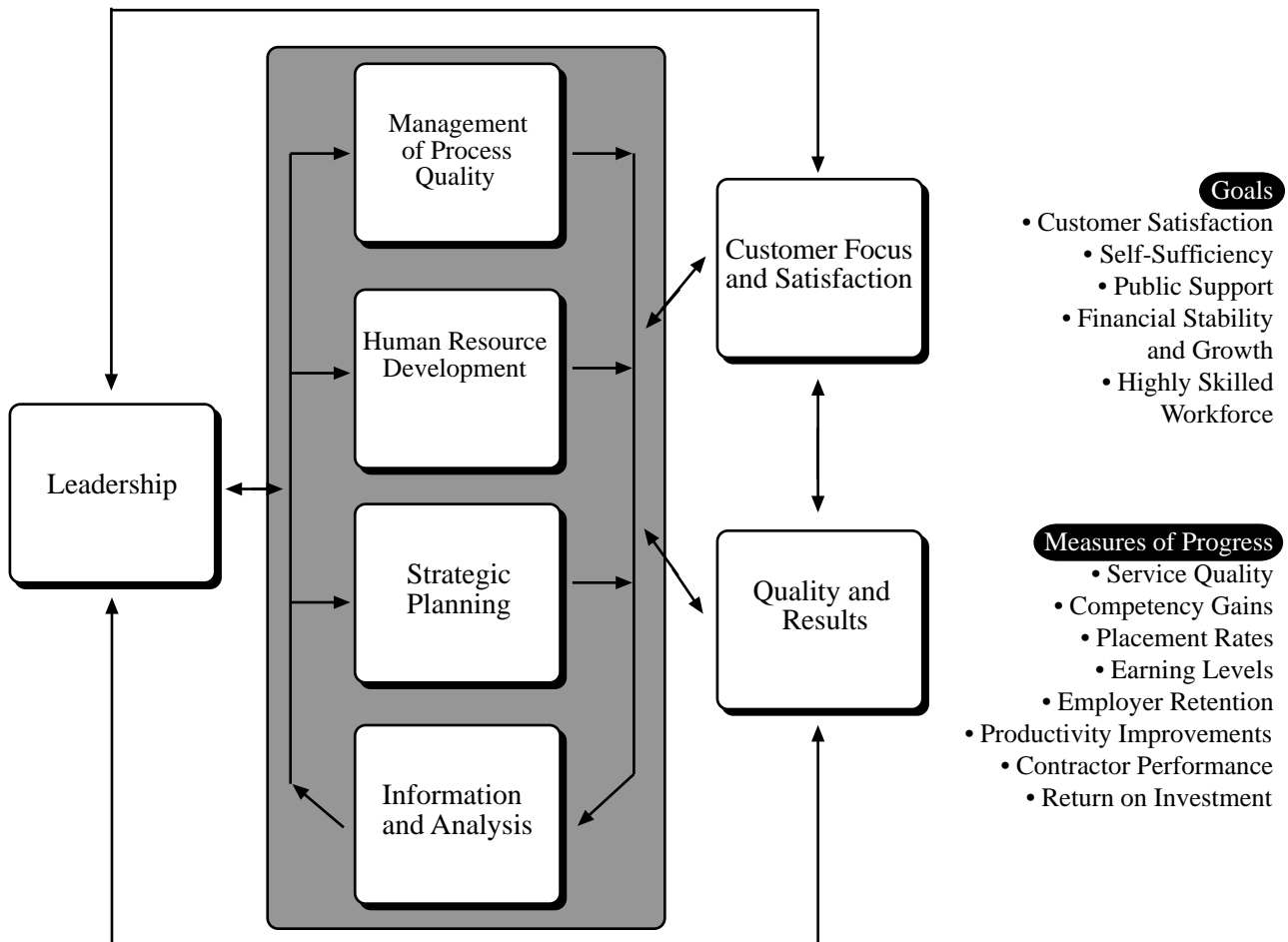
The organization's performance system focuses on **results**.

The Self-Assessment System

Overview

Continuous improvement is a never-ending, cyclical process. The Simply Better! process is similar to many others: *Leadership* helps define the goals of *Customer Focus and Satisfaction* as well as measures of *Quality and Results*. These three elements form the context in which the *Management of Process Quality*, *Strategic Planning*, and *Human Resource Development* take place. *Information and Analysis* flows throughout.

The Simply Better! Continuous Improvement Process



These dimensions all make up the whole: they interact with each other, guide each other, and help make success possible.

Continuous Improvement - Why Do It ?

It takes a serious commitment to become a high-performing, continuously-improving organization. Large corporations may spend millions of dollars and a decade of hard work to undertake massive cultural changes. Smaller companies also make major commitments of their resources: time, energy, and money. Today, more and more public sector organizations, including some of the most successful employment and training service providers in the country, have started down the road to continuous quality improvement.

Some benefits to becoming a continuously improving organization

Do a better job for your customers

Get better results and higher customer satisfaction

Feel better about going to work

Feel more ownership, sense of accomplishment, and passion

Energize your organization

Unlock the talent, creativity and commitment of your workforce

Strengthen your community

Become a leader in pulling together organizations and resources

Do more with less

Use your resources more effectively

Compete and survive

Win support from customers, taxpayers, and funding sources

Provide better services to customers

Become more responsive, more customer focused, and more effective

Today, more and more public sector organizations, including some of the most successful employment and training service providers in the country, have started down the road to continuous quality improvement.

Continuous Improvement is
Doing what you do
Better and Better!

The Self-Assessment System

Once your organization has made the decision to embark on the journey of continuous improvement, how should you begin? Some organizations have one or two areas which they know need work. Others have a general sense that things could be a lot better.

The decision of where to start is a daunting one - especially since there are countless aspects of being a continuously improving organization. The old adage applies here, however: *if you don't know where you're going, any road will take you there.*

The first step to becoming a continuously improving organization is to understand your strengths and opportunities relative to continuous improvement. This requires some rigor, but is a very achievable goal. An organizational self-assessment will give you the information you need, in an orderly, relevant, and accurate manner, to begin the journey of continuous improvement.

As with all parts of a continuous improvement process, the self-assessment is a challenging, time consuming venture. Of course, if it were simple and quick, it would be of very limited value.

**“beneficial,
fascinating,
productive,
enlightening,
organizational
teambuilding,
exciting, tense,
intense, positive,
in-depth,
different,
frustrating,
constantly
challenging,
timely, revealing,
time consuming,
eye opening”**

-what the field tests
said about their self-
assessment
experiences

Some benefits to undertaking a self-assessment process

Develop a plan for the future

Know where improvements can be made and how to make them

Build support in your community

Demonstrate quality, business-like rigor, and results

Empower the workforce

Focus the system around empowered teams

Increase energy, commitment and passion

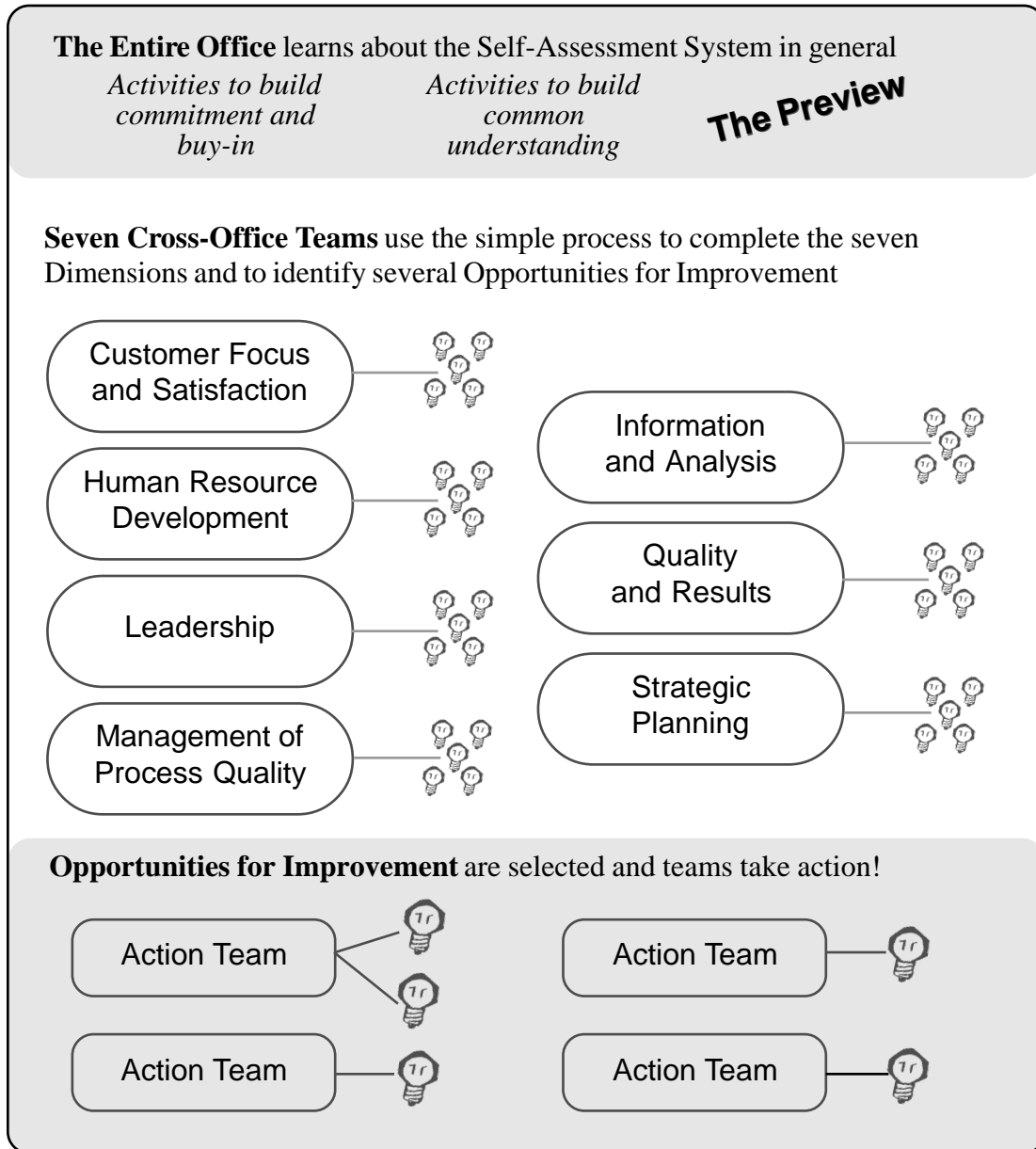
Invigorate and energize the entire staff

Track progress over time

See growth and improvement through easy-to-use tracking systems

How the Self-Assessment System is Structured

The self-assessment process is designed to gather a large amount of information, understand what it means, rate it on a continuous improvement scoring scale, and, most importantly, develop a plan for action.



Each dimension team will go through an easy-to-follow process of *answering* questions, *scoring and brainstorming* strengths and areas of opportunity, *discussing and ranking* the opportunities, and *planning* for change.

Opportunities for Improvement will be brought together when all of the dimension teams are finished. The organization overall will begin planning for the future and **taking action**.

Some Things to Consider

Organizational self-assessments do not succeed on their own. They involve many hours of hard work, the energy and commitment of many in the organization, a willingness to be open, and possibly a resource commitment. If done correctly, however, a self-assessment can help your organization to recognize the benefits of building on its strengths, identify and take advantage of opportunities to improve, and promote staff involvement and accountability.

Although there is no right way to plan for and conduct a self-assessment, there are important things that every organization should consider before getting started:

Buy-in by top management

The commitment of top management is essential for convincing staff to devote their energy and time to the S-A-S process, particularly when it comes time to implement changes. Don't proceed with the self-assessment if there is not strong commitment all the way through to taking action.

A clearly defined purpose

Your organization should be clear on why it wants to do the S-A-S and what it expects to get out of it. This should be clearly communicated and understood by everyone. Assess what you can change, i.e., bite off only as much as you can chew and avoid doing the S-A-S beyond your organization's scope of control.

Participation by all staff whenever possible

Involve your entire organization by having as many people as possible participate. Be sure the teams get the support they need to complete their work.

Appoint or hire a coordinator

Conducting the self-assessment requires careful planning, involves many people working in teams, and may occur over several weeks or months. A coordinator is essential to managing this kind of process successfully from beginning to end.

Share information on successes

Provide periodic progress reports to let staff know how it's going and bring everyone together at the completion of the dimensions to hear the conclusions.

Develop clear and concise actions

Action planning is the critical step in making the link from opportunities to action and in confirming to those involved that doing the assessment was worthwhile. The actions must be do-able, realistic, involve all staff to some extent, be measurable, and be reported on a regular basis.

By following these basic guidelines, your self-assessment can be a great success. Staff will have a stronger sense of ownership, responsibility, and accountability. Most organizations become more energized as well. However, without participation and ownership by the staff and without management support through the action phase, the process can lead to cynicism and distrust. This is not a decision to be made lightly!

The Self-Assessment Preview

The Preview is a quick look at what continuous improvement and the Self-Assessment System are all about. By completing the Preview, you will have a basic understanding about the seven continuous improvement dimensions as well as the type of questions asked in the Self-Assessment. It only takes ten or fifteen minutes to complete the Preview on your own.

When people in a group fill out the Preview individually, the results can be very enlightening. People score the Preview based on their own experience - the range in scores is often dramatic! This underscores one of the strengths of the Self-Assessment System: it brings people together to come to a shared understanding of how the organization really functions. Holding a group discussion after people complete the Preview can help an organization begin to develop common understanding in many areas, or at least to know where common understanding needs to evolve.

The Preview can also be done as a group exercise, although this takes much more time. People discussing the Preview, or sections of the Preview, will begin to understand the breadth of perspective in the organization. The Preview, as its name suggests, is really just the tip of the iceberg. When teams tackle the complete dimensions, they will be going into much more depth than they could with the Preview.

Don't get discouraged if you don't do well! The Preview and the Self-Assessment System do not measure how well you meet traditional measures of success, or your commitment to excellence or service, or how efficiently you meet your objectives. Rather, they are tools to help you see the sophistication of the continuous improvement processes you already have in place. This is a relatively new art - almost no one had these tools twenty years ago, and virtually few organizations can call themselves world-class when rated on these scales. This does not mean that the tools are not useful.

How to Complete the Preview

The Preview is extremely easy to fill out - it takes most people about fifteen or twenty minutes.

Step One

Individually or as a team, decide where your organization falls along the thermometer. This is a continuum, so don't be afraid to locate yourself anywhere along the thermometer.

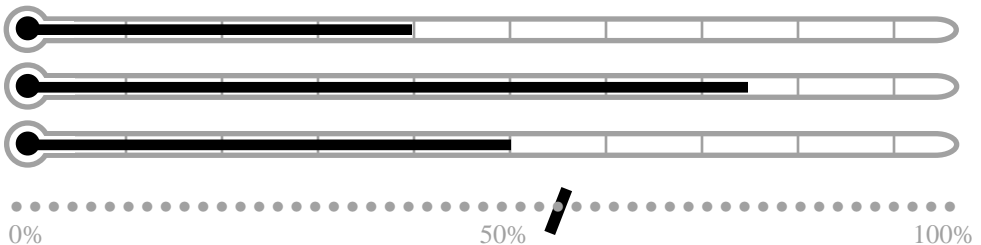
Step Two

Using a crayon or marker, fill in the thermometer up to the point on the scale which best matches your organization. Remember, this is a subjective judgment, so precision is impossible!



Step Three

For each section, mark the average score on the bottom scale. You may want to eyeball the average length of the lines to come up with a score, or you may want to compute the average. Again, because this is subjective, precise scoring is not necessary.



In this example, the score is about 55%, which is very good! Most organizations seriously involved in quality and continuous improvement can expect to fall in the 40% - 60% range. Even nationally recognized award winners rarely score above 75% across all categories.

Customer Focus and Satisfaction

Customer Focus and Satisfaction examines your organization's knowledge of customer requirements and how relationships with customers are established and maintained.

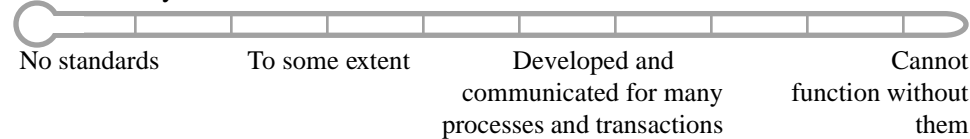
Customer Expectations

The organization seeks to understand customers' needs and expectations.



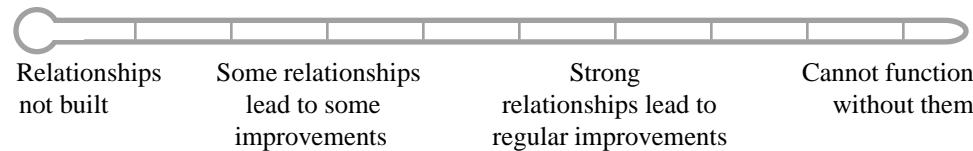
Customer Service Standards

The organization has customer service standards which are communicated to and understood by all staff.



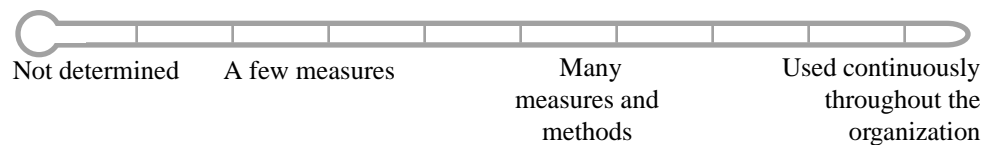
Customer Relationship Management

The organization builds relationships with customers, and uses the information to improve those relationships as well as processes and services.



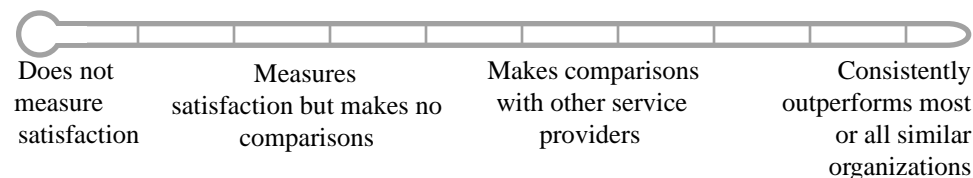
Determining Customer Satisfaction

The organization uses methods and measures to determine its customers' satisfaction.



Customer Satisfaction Results

The organization measures customer satisfaction (and dissatisfaction) and compares its results to those of other organizations.



World Class Organizations

Quality is judged by customers. The key focus of the organization is the products and services that customers value and that lead to customer satisfaction and future preference.

Value, satisfaction, and preference may be influenced by many factors. These factors include the organization's relationships which help to build trust, confidence, and loyalty of customers.

Customer-driven quality is a strategic concept. It is directed toward customer retention and expansion. It demands constant sensitivity to customer requirements and the measurement of the factors that drive customer satisfaction and retention.

Leadership

World Class Organizations

Senior leaders create and reinforce a clear vision and values, set goals and high expectations, and recognize employee contributions. Reinforcement of the values and expectations requires personal commitment and involvement.

•

Senior leaders take part in the creation of the strategies, systems and methods for achieving excellence and building capabilities which guide all activities and decisions of the organization.

•

Senior leaders are committed to the development of the vision for their workforce and community and encourage participation and creativity by all staff.

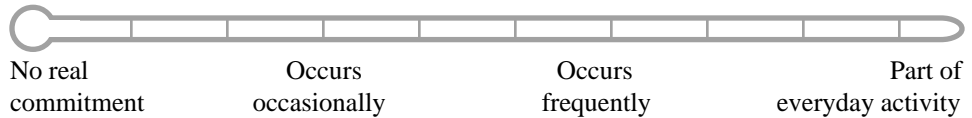
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Through their personal involvement in activities such as planning, communications, performance review, and recognition of staff achievements, senior leaders serve as role models, reinforcing the values and encouraging leadership and initiative.

Leadership examines the involvement of your organization's senior leaders in creating and sustaining a focus on 'customer,' making commitments to ever-higher levels of quality, and fostering a management system to guide the organization toward quality excellence.

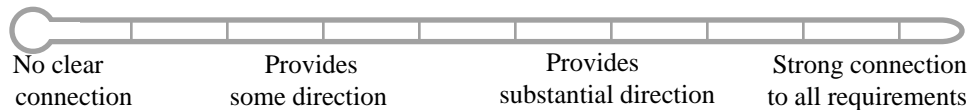
Senior Leadership

Senior leaders involve themselves in creating and reinforcing vision and values, setting goals, reviewing performance, and recognizing staff contributions.



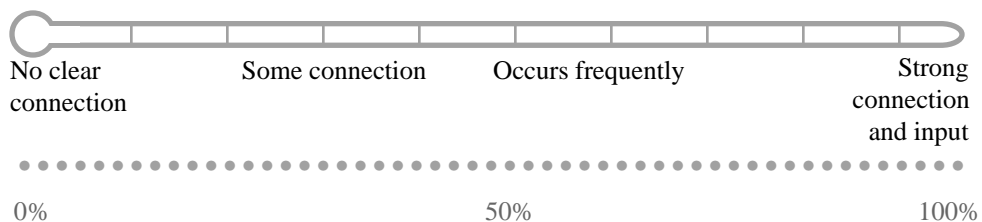
Leadership System and Organization

The organization's focus on customer and high performance objectives are translated into performance requirements for managers and work units.



Public Responsibility and Citizenship

The organization includes public responsibilities in performance improvement practices and contributes as a responsible citizen in our community.

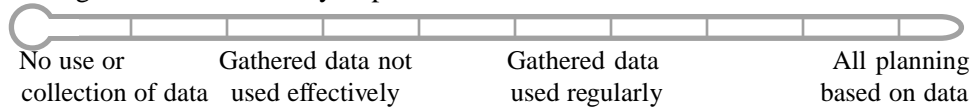


Information and Analysis

Information and Analysis examines your organization's use and management of valid data and information to drive excellence and to improve overall performance.

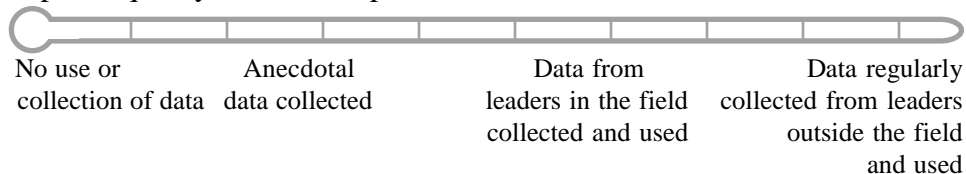
Management of Information and Data

The types of data and information the organization uses for planning and management are constantly improved and drive excellence.



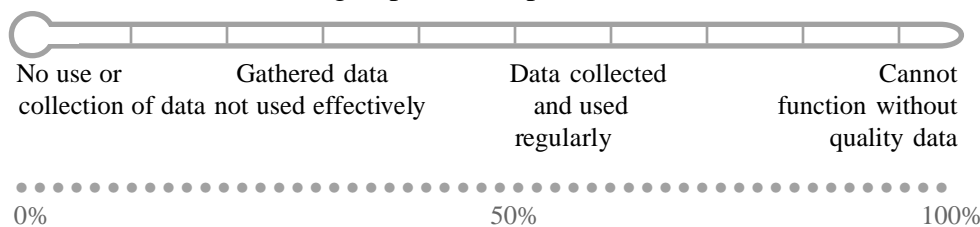
Comparisons and Benchmarking

The organization continuously collects data on world or national leaders in and out of the field and consistently uses the information to improve quality and overall performance.



Analysis and Use of Data

The organization's approaches to aggregate and use various types of data support continuous improvement, quality services, customer satisfaction, and high operational performance.



World Class Organizations

Performance management is built on a framework of measurement, information data, and analysis.

Measures come from the organization's strategy and encompass all key processes and the outputs and results of those processes.

Data is collected about all aspects of the organization and analysis of the data supports decision making at all levels.

Information and analysis support planning, reviewing performance, improving operations, comparing performance with "best practices" benchmarks, and more.

A system of measures and indicators tied to customer and organizational performance requirements represents a clear and objective basis for aligning all activities with the organization's goals.

Strategic Planning

World Class Organizations

High quality outcomes require a strong future orientation and a willingness to make long-term commitments to all stakeholders — customers, staff, contractors, the public, and the community.

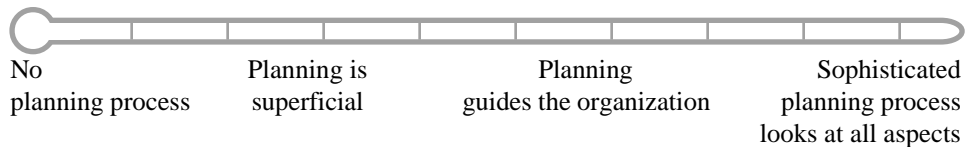
Planning is the means to anticipate many types of changes including those that may affect customers' expectations of services, technological developments, evolving regulatory requirements, and community expectations.

Short- and long-term operating plans, strategies, and resource allocations need to reflect commitments of and changes in the organization.

Strategic Planning examines your organization's planning process and how all key quality requirements are integrated into overall organizational planning.

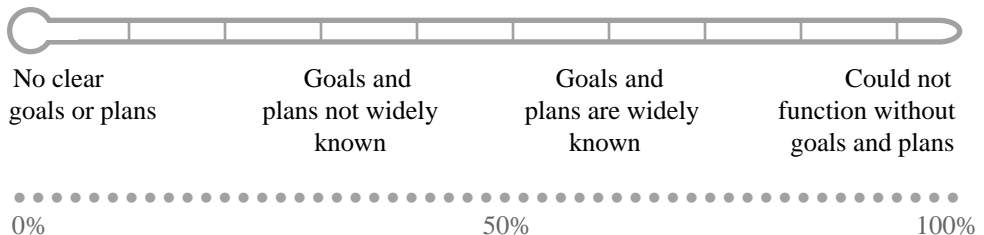
Strategy Development

The organization has a highly developed process for determining short-term (1-2 years) and long-term (3 years or more) strategies and operating plans to achieve leadership in customer satisfaction and overall organizational improvement.



Strategy Deployment

The goals and plans for short- and long-term are used in all units for process management and they are continuously improved.

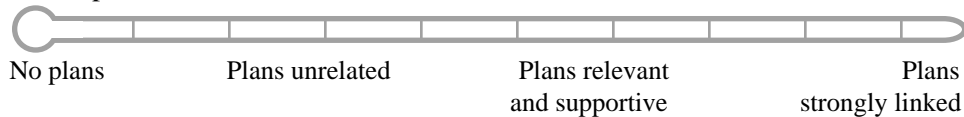


Human Resource Development

Human Resource Development examines the effectiveness of your organization's efforts to develop and realize the full potential of the workforce, including management.

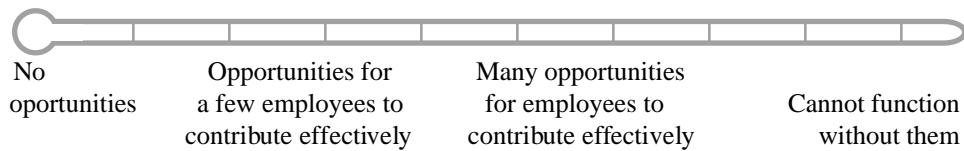
Human Resource Planning and Evaluation

Human resource planning and practices support quality leadership and improved overall performance.



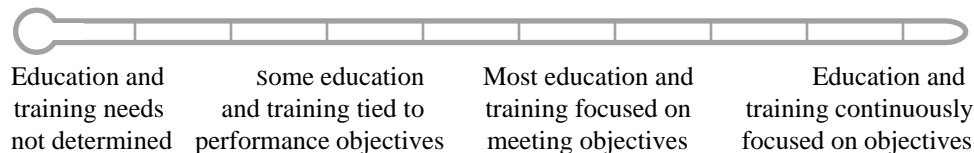
High Performance Work Systems

The organization's work and job design create opportunities for all employees to contribute effectively to organizational goals.



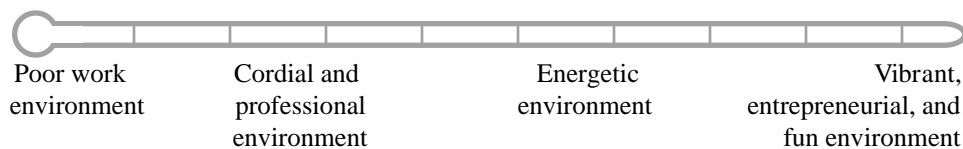
Employee Education, Training and Development

The organization makes full use of education and training to meet key performance objectives.



Employee Well-Being and Satisfaction

Labor and management maintain a work environment conducive to the well-being and growth of all employees.



World Class Organizations

Success in improving performance depends on the skills and motivation of the workforce.

Employee success requires meaningful opportunities to learn, practice new skills, and contribute to performance objectives.

Increasingly, training, development and work organizations should be tailored to a more diverse workforce and to more flexible, high performance work practices.

Major challenges in the area of workforce development include the integration and alignment of human resource management with vision, goals, operational plans, and strategic change processes.

Addressing these challenges requires learning new ways of aligning employee and performance data with objectives and strategic plans.

Management of Process Quality

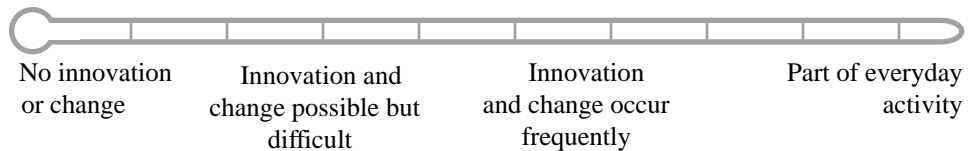
Management of Process Quality examines the systematic processes your organization uses to improve the quality of its key services, service delivery, and overall performance.

World Class Organizations

Management places strong emphasis on design quality; problem and waste prevention are achieved through building quality into key services and service delivery processes.

Design and Introduction of Services

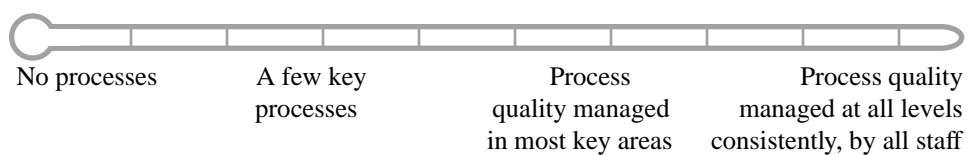
New and/or improved services are developed to ensure higher quality and improved performance.



Continuous improvement emphasizes interventions upstream at the early stages in processes. The approach is embedded in the way an organization functions: improvement is part of the daily work of all work units; improvement processes seek to eliminate problems at their source; and improvement is driven by opportunities to do better.

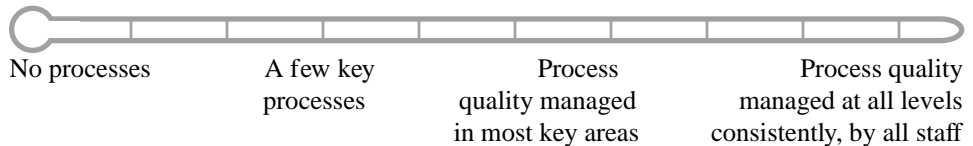
Service Delivery

Key processes (such as assessment, training, and placement) are managed for quality and improved.



Administrative Services

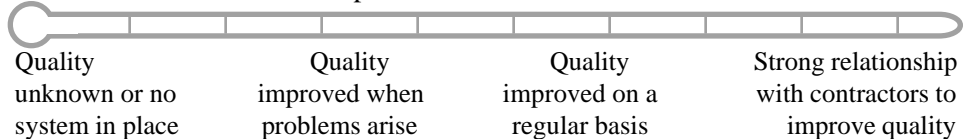
Key administrative processes are managed so that current requirements are met and quality and performance are continuously improved.



Improvement is driven not only by the goal of providing better services, but also by the need to be responsive and efficient. To meet these objectives, continuous improvement must contain planning cycles.

Contractor Performance

The quality of services, performance, and customer satisfaction furnished by contractors is assured and improved.

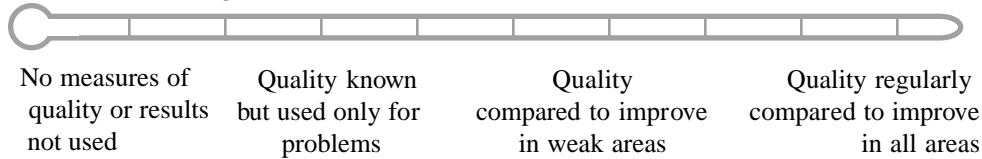


Quality and Results

Quality and Results examines your organization's achievements based on service quality and end results.

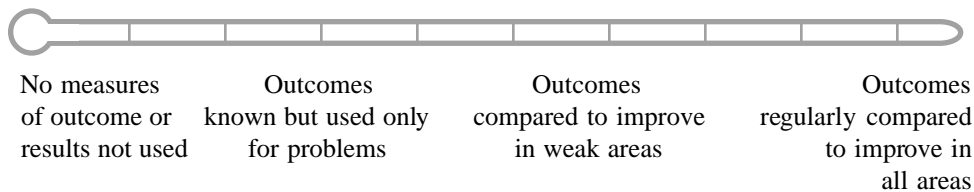
Service Quality Results

The organization measures service quality and compares its results to those of other organizations.



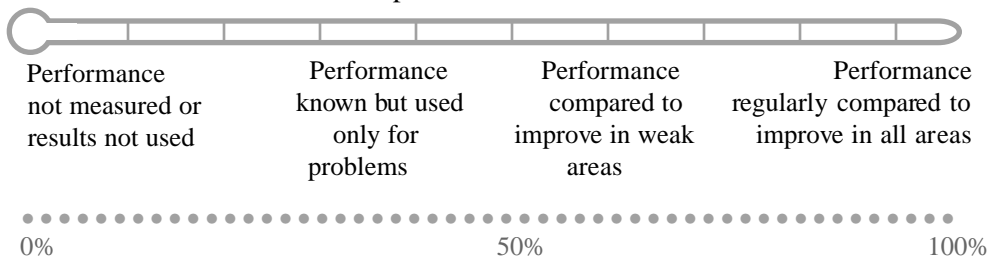
Outcome Results

The organization measures outcomes and compares its results to those of other organizations.



Contractor Performance

The organization measures contractor performance and compares its results to those of other similar providers.



World Class Organizations

Results are guided by the interests of all stakeholders: customers, staff, contractors, partners, elected officials, and the community.

To meet sometimes conflicting and changing aims, organizational strategy needs to explicitly address all stakeholder requirements.

The use of a balanced mix of performance indicators offers an effective means to communicate requirements, to monitor actual performance, and to generate support for improving results.

Benchmarking is an important aspect in the focus on results. This involves finding and modeling leading national and world organizations who perform similar functions, in and out of the field.

Now that you have completed the Preview, you have a general sense of the areas covered by the Self-Assessment System. Where the Preview asks general questions and is completed on your own, the full Self-Assessment is comprehensive and team-based. People from the same organization may answer the Preview very differently; in the full Self-Assessment a cross-section of staff will come to a common and in-depth understanding of continuous improvement in your organization.

The Dimension Process

Each of the seven dimensions (the same seven sections as in the Preview) will be addressed in depth by a team representing a broad range of people from your organization. Each of the seven teams will spend anywhere from 8-12 hours completing their dimension, using a four step process.

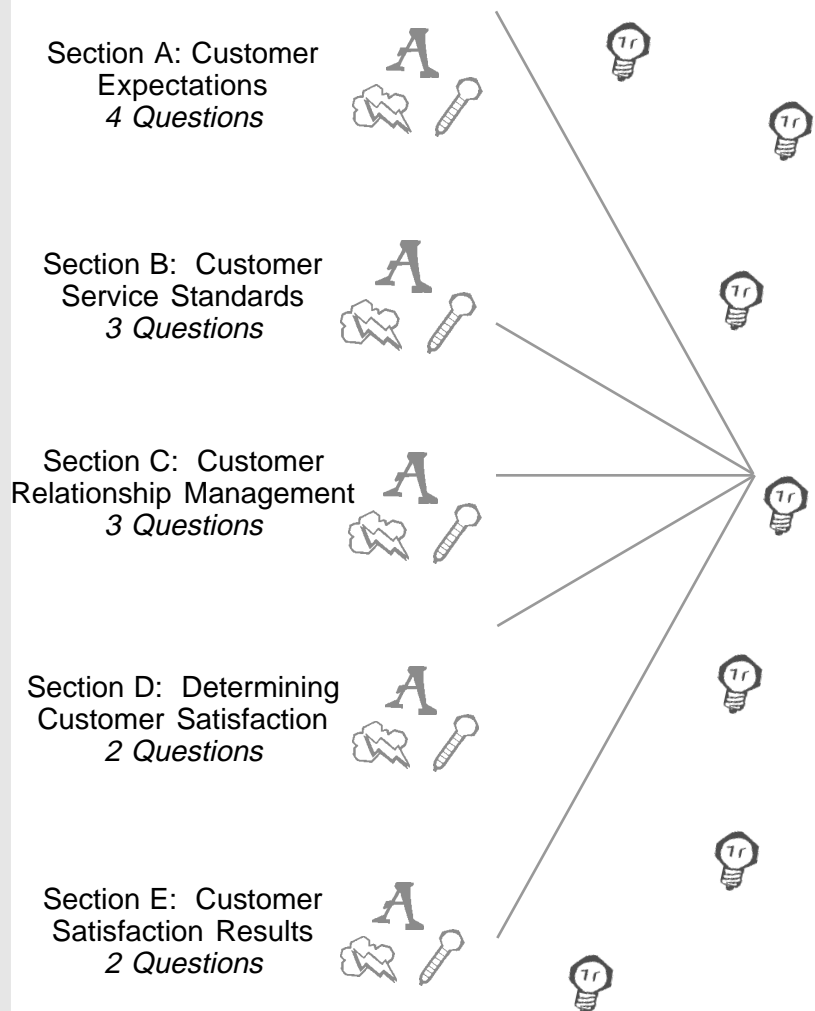
This diagram illustrates the process for the Customer Focus and Satisfaction Dimension Team. Each of the other six teams follow the same basic process.

Each dimension team is helped along by a facilitator or team leader. This person should be familiar with the process and content of the Dimension, and should have some basic team facilitation skills

Step 1 Discuss Terms and Concepts



Step 2 Answer, Score and Brainstorm Strengths and Opportunities for the questions in each of the five sections

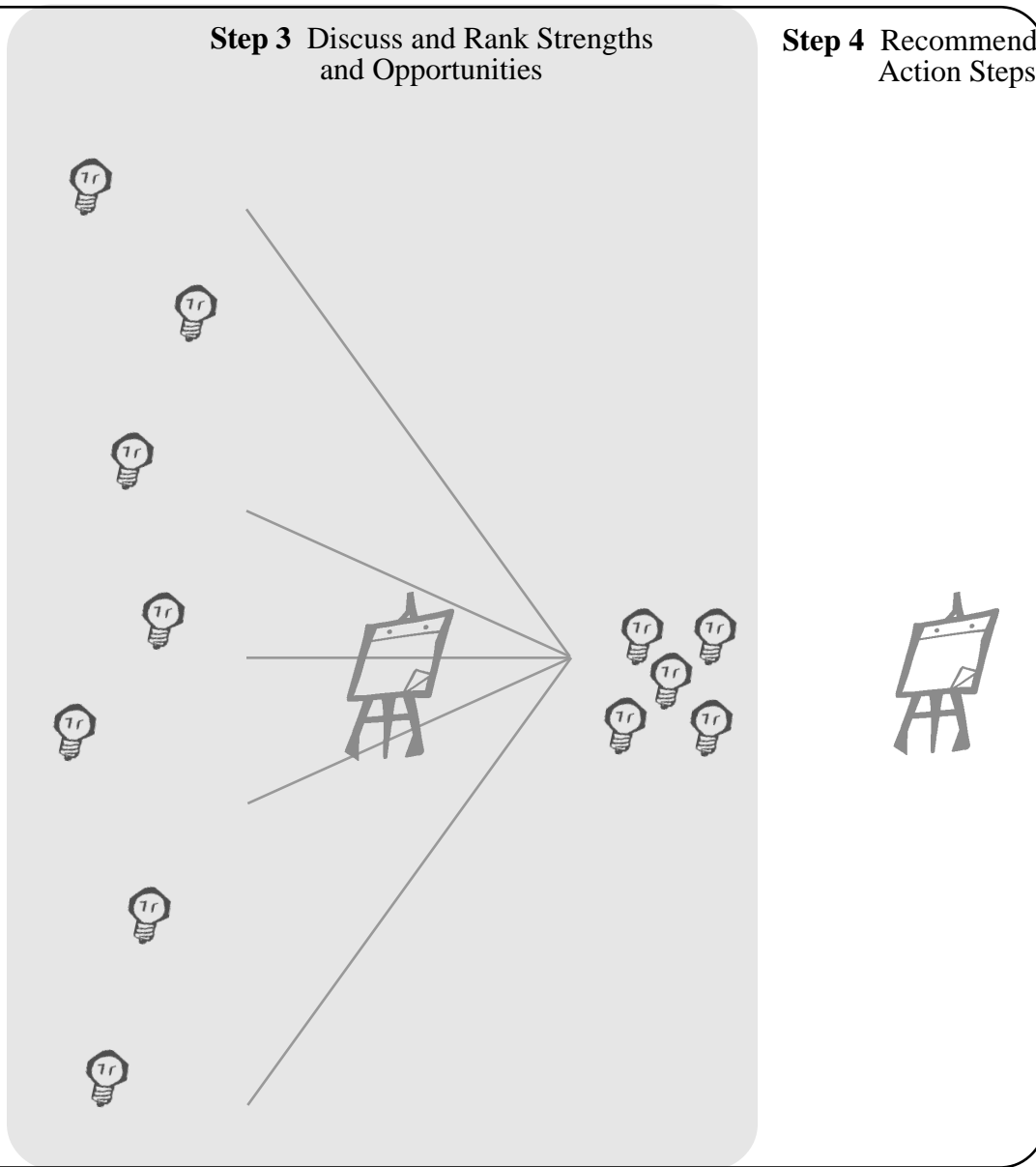


The Self-Assessment System

Overview

This simple process leads the team to a deep understanding of the dimension as it applies to the entire organization. In doing this, people gain a far greater appreciation of what they do, how they do it, how well they do it, and how it affects everyone else.

When the team has completed the process, it will come back to the larger organization in order to share its opportunities and suggested actions. The larger process is described more fully on page 9.



The end result of the team process is a set of Opportunities and possible actions. The organization as a whole will then decide which of the opportunities and actions to tackle

Key Terms

These are a few of the key terms you will encounter in the Self-Assessment System. The Dimension workbooks each contain a list of relevant Key Terms and Concepts.

Continuous Improvement

Doing what you do better and better. A systematic, organized, yet flexible effort to achieve gains in quality, productivity, speed, and cost. Improvement to a system, process, or service that is gradual and ongoing. Continuous improvement can also refer to breakthrough improvement.

Customer

The people, organizations, or groups receiving the products or services of your organization. In the S-A-S, customers are job-seekers and employers, the direct beneficiaries of local workforce development services.

Customer Satisfaction

The degree to which your organization meets or exceeds the needs and expectations of those you serve.

Organization

The entity identified for the self-assessment process.

Process

An operation that changes material or information from one form to another. A process is a series of interrelated tasks that transform and add value to input thereby creating output.

Senior Leaders

The top administrator or executive of the organization and those managers who report directly to that person.

Services

Work done for others. The completion of a process that provides an intangible product which meets a particular customer need. Some workforce development services include job information and referral, training, and filling job orders.

Service Standard

The desired achievement level for the measured performance of a service. Service standards should address key aspects of services including integrity, cost, and quality.

Strategic Planning

A future-oriented process of defining the purpose and scope of an organization within which priorities are identified and broad goals are established. Such planning deals with the focus and thrust of an organization and its goals. The process of translating broad policies and goals into plans of action is sometimes considered to be operational planning.

Responsible Citizen

The idea that every organization is a citizen in its local community and has opportunities for leadership, positive influence, and involvement in civic endeavors such as education, community services, and the environment.

Thank You!

Many thanks to all of our Simply Better! colleagues for their thoughtfulness and attention in reviewing our draft documents. Their initial comments helped to form the basis for this guide. Simply Better! team members are listed in the *Resources* section of the *Guidebook*.

Representatives of the Department of Labor national and regional offices provided countless creative ideas and critical comments which helped to improve this system. Their willingness to help create a learning network around Simply Better! will be felt, we hope, for years to come.

Staff from many employment and training organizations and programs provided comments and suggestions, which gave us a strong sense of what is important to our customers.

Many of the ideas in the Simply Better! Self-Assessment System are based on work done by the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, the President's Quality Award, the Oregon Quality Initiative, and the Florida Sterling Council. We thank them for their pioneering thinking on the self-assessment process.

Kiho Yi formatted the nine booklets of the S-A-S, and Malcolm Williams designed the icons. Both are students at The Art Institute of Seattle, and we hope that they were enriched by this school-to-work experience. We certainly learned from them.

Most of all, we are tremendously grateful for the hours, days, and weeks spent by the sixteen organizations from around the country who field tested our draft materials. The energy and commitment which they gave to conducting the field tests, and working with us in Seattle over four days to improve the S-A-S, will come through when future organizations use this system. Our experience of designing a product with our customers gave us a new understanding of the term 'Customer Focus'. It has been an invaluable lesson. The field test and observer organizations and their coordinators are also listed in the *Resources* section of the *Guidebook*.

The Simply Better! Self-Assessment Team

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The Simply Better! Team

There are several Simply Better! Product Development Teams from organizations around the country working with over 50 front-line agencies to guarantee the quality and ease-of-use of our products. The larger Simply Better! movement includes private industry councils, private sector service providers, employment service agencies, state agencies, community colleges, and the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. Active Simply Better! Team members are:

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- ☐ Please send me a complete copy of the Simply Better! Self-Assessment System
- ☐ Please send me all future Simply Better! products
- ☐ Please keep me informed about Simply Better! events in my area
- ☐ Please call me to discuss Simply Better!

Name

Organization

Address

Phone

Fax

Email

How did you hear about Simply Better!?

We want to hear your comments. Please call us or fax them along!

If You're *Still* Not Convinced

The Self-Assessment System would look very different were it not for the tremendous work of the eight field test organizations and their observers. If you are still not sure whether the Self-Assessment System or continuous improvement is for you, please feel free to call any one of them!

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